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At the initiation or seclusion the candidates all receive new *bo*, which are stained red. As it is usual for the candidate to be fully developed he has nearly always assumed his *bo* previously through motives of modesty; but it is now bestowed again. On only one occasion have I seen a youth brave it out, and wait for a formal opportunity of assuming a perineal band even after he had obviously reached the age of puberty.

The *bo* is given by any of a variety of relatives. Among fifteen instances it was given six times by the true father, six times by the maternal uncle, and once each by the paternal grandfather, the maternal grandfather, and the elder brother. For the actual investiture a man of distinction may be asked to officiate, just as in the more important *Otobu* ceremony the *otobu* is bestowed by a noted warrior.

The girl's *bo*, a skirt of bark-cloth, is assumed at the termination of the seclusion which follows the first appearance of her menses. When she makes her début, it is with a spear or club in one hand, a bunch of betel-nuts in the other, and a bark-cloth skirt about her waist with a hole in it which is supposed to, but does not, show her genitalia. No satisfactory reason was given for this last detail, except that a girl would be subject to ridicule afterwards if it were not carried out. In the majority of the Orokaiva tribes the girl continues to wear an ordinary *bo* skirt after the ceremony; but among the Aiga and the River People this investiture is only an incident. The girl, although fully developed, goes naked until her marriage, only wearing a *bo* during her periods. This custom, viz. of unmarried girls going naked, is falling into disuse.

The Initiation Cycle. Usually about the age of puberty, but sometimes earlier, boys and girls undergo an initiation; though it is only among the Southern Orokaiva that the ceremony takes a definite and unmistakable form. Here the candidates (male and female) are subjected to a good deal of horse-play at the hands of men impersonating *embahi* or *siango*, i.e. spirits of the dead; and in the course of it they are introduced to the bull-roarer and the sacred flute, which are of course objects of mystery to the uninitiated children.

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Among the Aiga and the River People, where the bull-roarer and the sacred flute are unknown, it seems that the place of this initiation ceremony is in some degree taken by the mime or drama. In this drama the initiate may play a minor part, and he is brought into contact with an impersonation of the dead.

After the initiation, or the dramatic performance which takes the place of an initiation, there follows a seclusion of some months. At the termination of the seclusion the initiates make a formal début, and are presented with certain gifts, consisting principally of feather head-dresses, to which is given the general name *kokumbari*. The word means literally 'decoration', and the ceremony amounts to a formal investiture which is necessary before a boy or a girl is entitled to wear a head-dress.

Another kind of gift is often made on the occasion of the *kokumbari*. This is known as *otobu*, and consists of a specially valuable and distinctive ornament or object which the candidate is thenceforward permitted to use. Its possession involves certain ethical obligations, and formerly in some cases it constituted a distinctive ornament of the homicide. The bestowal of the *otobu* may be reserved for a subsequent occasion, but in the majority of instances it appears that the moment of the début is regarded as favourable for the presentation. I shall therefore deal with the *otobu* as if it formed an integral part of what we might term the initiation cycle. Various precautionary or cleansing rites, principal among them being the eating of a ceremonial stew called *suna*, bring the cycle to a close.

To summarize on the matters of initiation and seclusion it will be seen that there is a series of distinct episodes, viz. (1) initiation to the bull-roarer and the sacred flutes (or among the northern Orokaiva the mime or drama which probably takes the place of initiation); (2) seclusion; (3) début with the *kokumbari* or decoration; and (4) presentation of the *otobu*. The whole cycle concludes (5) with the eating of a purificatory stew called *suna*.

The above summary disregards one or two minor differences between tribes as to the sequence of the episodes.

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There is also in some tribes a brief seclusion preparatory to initiation. But the essential features may all be gathered under the above five headings. A full treatment of them is reserved to Chapter XII.

It is normally after initiation that the youth proceeds to marriage, and thereafter he follows the even tenor of his way to old age. There are no striking social changes after marriage. In the normal instance the father lives in his village and brings up a family and grows old working. If he be a man of character his influence will probably increase with his years; and whether this be so or not, he is reasonably assured—by a pleasing trait of primitive life—of the respect and consideration of his juniors.

The Constitution of the Clan

Having dealt with the immediate family and given an epitome of the social progress of the individual, I may proceed to the constitution of the clan.

Although the clan is a fairly well-defined group, it is difficult to find a satisfactory native name for it in the abstract. Among the Aiga the nearest approach seems to be the expression *embo-javo*, lit. 'man-name'; but this might stand in another context for the man's personal name. Among the Binandele there is a more definite term *oro-be*, 'the true *oro*' (the usual meaning of *oro* is men's house). In the Sangara dialect a word *araba* stands for either a village clearing or a clan. In the absence of a suitable native name I shall continue to use the word 'clan'.

The Formation of New Clans. The Orokaiva clan is patriarchal in constitution; it develops directly from the family in which the father is undisputed master. The clans vary greatly in size, but for the most part they are small; one of a dozen families might represent the average.

Consequently they are very numerous, and, as each and every one shows a tendency to split, they are not decreasing in number. Indeed, at the present time, when pacification has made it less essential to cling together for protection, it is possible there are more clans than ever before.

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Reasons for Raiding

721 The reasons for the inter-clan fighting are easy to understand: they are in the main nothing more than quarrels between hot-blooded neighbours. The reasons for the deliberate raid or *isoro*, which involves cannibalism, are not so obvious. Very commonly the raid was meant to avenge [602] some previous victim, for vengeance was absolutely imperative to the relatives of a slain man; and the expression for revenge itself is an interesting one, viz. *diroga-mine*, or an 'exchange of *diroga*', the latter meaning the spirit of a man slain in fight in contradistinction to the spirit of one who has died in any other way. Instances of compounding are apparently rare, and it may be (though I cannot speak with certainty) that the practice of compounding for death [628] obtains between clans only, and not between tribes. The compensation or blood-price, consisting of pigs and ornaments, is called *dorobu*, which word stands also for marriage payment. Between tribes, however, who normally stand in the mutual relation of *kitobu* it would seem that such amicable settlement is rare if not impossible. To show how im- [165] perative is the need for revenge I may mention the former rule that the widow of a man slain by an enemy tribe must continue her seclusion until the capture and killing of a man from that tribe made it possible for her to emerge from it.

I cannot find any binding ceremonial necessity for a raid other than the one just mentioned (and that is really a reason for returning a raid, not for making one in the first place). It appears that the corpses of victims were used in [585] payment for marriage, either *a-dorobu* or *bi-dorobu*, or for gifts between relatives. But this was probably a matter of convenience: I have no evidence that a corpse was *necessarily* part of the marriage payment. Then again there is the matter of homicidal insignia. Although these are sometimes [881] called *otobu* in common with the *otobu* given at initiation (*vide* pp. 201 ff.), it is not to be supposed that the latter were necessarily homicidal, i.e. that the killing of an enemy was demanded before a youth or girl could pass through the ceremony of receiving an *otobu*. In short, I do not know of

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XII

INITIATION CEREMONIES

THE course of initiation ceremonies has been already summarized in Chapter VII. Except in reference to the southern tribes, where there are esoteric objects such as the bull-roarer and the sacred flute, it must be allowed that the word 'initiation' is used somewhat loosely. All the tribes, however, possess certain ceremonies, usually performed about the age of puberty, which are virtually *rites de passage*, and which convert the candidate (boy or girl) into an *ebamei* or 'new child'. These may be conveniently called ceremonies of initiation. They are usually the occasions of large festivals, and a number of candidates of varying age are passed through them together. I shall proceed to describe the initiation ceremonies in their successive stages.

Initiation

The first stage is that of the initiation proper, viz. the entering into the secret of the bull-roarer and the flute, and this, as we have seen, belongs only to the southern tribes. A vivid description of the ceremony is found in the article by Chinnery and Beaver in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. xlv, 1915. It does not occur frequently, and it was not my good fortune to witness a full performance. I shall, therefore, take the liberty later on of quoting at some length from the above-mentioned source, for Mr. Chinnery not only saw the ceremony enacted among the Koko people of the Upper Yodda valley (Hunjara tribe), but 'was to a certain degree initiated himself into the Kokos'.

The candidates are of both sexes. On a recent occasion (at Wasida) there were, for example, seven boys and two girls; in another instance, nine boys and four girls. Those who [561] pass through initiation and seclusion together constitute something like an age-group; and one member will refer to the rest as *nanamei*, 'my children', i.e. 'the children of whom I am one'. The age of the candidates is variable. Normally

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it would appear they are pubescent youths and maidens, but sometimes they are much younger, and sometimes, on the other hand, they may be married. Mr. Chinnery remarked that among the candidates which he saw near Kokoda there were women in a fairly advanced condition of pregnancy.

Before actual initiation the candidates are interned for some time in a house built at a little distance from the village. During this initial seclusion, which is only of short duration and not to be confused with the seclusion proper, preparations are being made for the festival. A great harvest of food is accumulated, and a stage or platform called *obu* is built at one end of the village. The initiates meanwhile await their ordeal, which purports to be nothing less than a meeting with the *embabi* or *siango* (who are primarily spirits of the dead, but who are also conceived of, somewhat indefinitely, as malignant supernatural creatures, or—to give them a convenient or familiar name—devil-devils).

The *embabi* will be impersonated by men already initiated, and it appears that the candidates fully realize this before the event. A boy, for instance, was taken up to the *oro* for initial interment by his *epe* or maternal uncle, and told that the latter would 'wear his feathers'. This meant that the *epe* would impersonate an *embabi* and subsequently give the feathers as *kokumbari* or decoration to the boy. But the native enters with so much zest into the spirit of his ceremonies that one finds the border between make-believe and true belief to be very hazy. Writing of the candidates in the house of seclusion before the actual ceremony, Chinnery and Beaver say, 'The candidates being usually in a state of terror, they are warned that if they make a noise the spirit will take up the house and carry it away to some mountain and capsize it—their guide now tells them they are only going to see their fathers, but it does not appear that they are greatly reassured.'[1]

When the preparations are complete the younger children, who have not yet reached the initiation age, are taken away into the bush; the candidates wait in the *oro*; and guests pour in from the surrounding villages. All the men

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 72.

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881 present will join in representing the *embabi* in the ceremony which is to take place at night. Their only disguise will be face-paint, ornaments held in the characteristic way between the teeth, and flowing or bristling masses of feathers; but in the imagination of the candidates, and for the time being in their own, they will approach very nearly to true *embabi*.

I cannot do better than quote the words of Chinnery and Beaver to describe the exciting scene in the village at night.

'As the moon rises, all present become deadly silent. The men depart for the bush, at the same time putting out all fires and lights. When the moon shines, a long procession emerges from the bush into the village, moving very silently and stealthily, figures wearing huge headdresses, masked with frames of pigs' teeth, and armed with stone-headed clubs. Women are present, but do not join the line.

'Having entered the village, they form two advancing lines until a large scaffolding is reached, erected at one end of the village. Turning, the men kneel down facing the entrance from which they have come and remain in this position, still keeping silence. It is at this stage that the candidates are presented. Faint cries arise from the bush, becoming louder and louder, and the words "Shi! Shi!" mingled with yells and shrieks are distinguished, and at the same time the candidates are marshalled in, led by their guides. They advance between the lines of men who, hitherto silent, now break up into groups, each catching a lad and running madly up and down the village, followed by the women, waving spears and all uttering cries and yells and rubbing the youngsters' arms, legs, and bodies. They now make a wild rush towards the scaffolding, throwing the lads on it, who endeavour to climb up out of reach, but are torn back by the mob and undergo further agony, until, utterly exhausted with fright and fatigue, they are allowed to climb away, not knowing what they may still have to put up with.

'Still retaining their group formation, the men rush forward to the scaffold uttering horrible yells, waving their heads sideways with faces upturned to the lads, and swinging their clubs, only to retreat again. Now and again a man will yell from the group, "*Nano shiango*" (I am the spirit), swinging his club to strike, but the other men will rush in upon him, throw him to the ground, and take his weapon away.'

This violence and pandemonium continue through the night. At daybreak the girl candidates are led in and subjected to the same treatment in somewhat milder form. Then the candidates, male and female, are mustered on the *obu* platform, where they sit completely covered with hoods of bark-cloth. Trees are pulled down in the village

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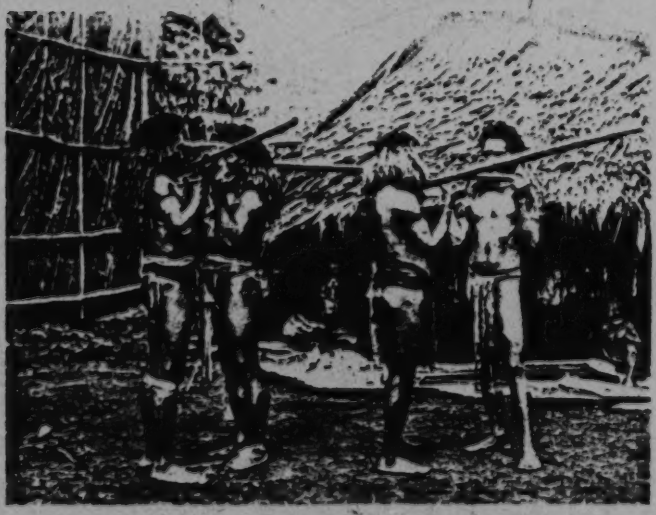
(*a*) Initiates secluded in the *Oro*



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(*b*) Initiates playing the *Sepiri* or Sacred Flute

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by means of long lianas, and the bull-roarers are sounded, giving forth their peculiarly expressive and rather terrifying notes, which range from the deepest bass to a piercing siren-like shriek. To the boys and girls, who cannot see for their hoods of bark-cloth, these noises are evidences of the *embabi* or *siango*. Fathers and mothers cry out to the spirits to spare and not devour their children, while the spirits themselves utter a terrible chant or concerted cry, and gabble, '*Kambo, kambo, kambo!*' which means 'Bite, bite, bite!' It is not hard to picture the mood of the initiates who hear everything and see nothing from under their bark-cloth hoods.

And yet the candidate is aware that the proceedings are, in a sense, all sham. A young girl, who had been seized by a number of men and thrown into the air again and again, as if she were tossed in a blanket, said that these men were not bush-*embabi*, but village-*embabi*, meaning, as she explained, that they were not the terrible beings who in Orokaiva theory haunt the bush, but only villagers masquerading.

In the morning the candidates are shown the bull-roarers and flutes which they have heard sounded by the *embabi* overnight; the *embabi* retire to the river, bathe, and return as mere human beings, and the inevitable feast ensues. The candidates are now interned in the *oro* (the sexes being segregated), and there they remain for a long period of seclusion.

Seclusion of Initiates

The ceremony of initiation, which has just been described, is followed by a period of seclusion, and this again by a formal début with the bestowal of *kokumbari* and *otobu*. It appears, however, that this sequence is not entirely uniform. In Wasida I was informed that the *kokumbari* and *otobu* were given immediately after the *embabi* ceremony and before the subsequent seclusion; in Divina Kovari, where I witnessed a formal début, they were certainly given after this seclusion. Among the Aiga and Binandele it is customary for the seclusion to follow the giving of *kokumbari* and *otobu*. Without regard to this variety, however, I will describe separately the seclusion, the début, and bestowal

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881 of *kokumbari*, the bestowal of *otobu*, and the precautionary or purificatory rites (*ate-ate* and *suna*) which bring the cycle of ceremonies to an end.

Before proceeding with the description of seclusion, it is necessary to make one important matter clear, viz. that I am here dealing only with the seclusion that forms a part of the initiation cycle. There is another seclusion, viz. that through which girls must pass at the age of puberty. It appears that the manner of internment is in both cases much the same, but in order to avoid confusion I shall mention the distinction between them, calling one the initiatory seclusion and the other the puberty seclusion; and I shall reserve a description of the latter until the end of the chapter. A girl enters her puberty seclusion immediately upon her first menstruation, and may pass through it alone. Subsequently she may be one of a batch of youths and girls who are to undergo initiation together, and in that case she will pass through a second seclusion, viz. the initiatory seclusion. It is this which I shall proceed to deal with.

881 344 Seclusion is practised by all the tribes, north and south; and it appears that the same general rules are observed in all cases. The house of seclusion, removed a little distance from the village, stands in a small enclosure (*sama*) fenced about with palm-leaf barriers some thirteen or fourteen feet in height. The house is called *oro* (Aiga) [1] and may in some instances, I am told, accommodate both boy and girl candidates; for it is said that they are all 'brothers and sisters' and may, therefore, be trusted to behave. Usually, however, those who arrange the matter are less trusting, and the two sexes are confined separately. One house of seclusion which I saw was about 9 feet by 15 feet in area and consisted of a single large room in which nine boys were confined. The house was closed in on all sides and the eyes of the inmates seemed very wide in the perpetual semi-darkness.

881 The secluded children are called *i-tekari-mei*, 'The children who are shut up above', or simply *i-mei*, 'the on-top children'. They occupy the upper part of a pile house, the actual ground floor of which is used by the old men who

[1] Binandele *suwu*; Hunjara *ibrur* (Chimney and Beaver).

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look after them. They discard all ornaments, but it seems, nowadays at least, to be a matter of indifference whether or no they wear a *bo*. They must not wash, and it is said to be the proper thing to keep the house warm by a fire underneath; though this, I believe, is not meant as a trial to the initiates, but rather to make them comfortable. Whenever they please they may exercise themselves in the *sama* enclosure, and occasionally they go farther afield in the bush.

Chinnery and Beaver give a number of rules and precepts which the children are supposed to learn in their seclusion;[1] and I have been told that during this period they are instructed to be honest, obliging, and diligent. But we must not picture the *sama* enclosure as a severe school of tribal morals. It is certain that the initiates live a thoroughly indolent and easy life, doing no work save the plaiting of armlets and such tasks, in which there is more of amusement than labour. Their hardest task is that of learning to play the flutes (*sepiri*, *inagu*, or *gauro*), and it is said that the duration of their seclusion will be regulated by the skill which the school attains: the sooner they learn, the sooner they come out. But there is no doubt that the regulating factor is really the supply of food for the feast.

The method of playing these flutes has already been described (p. 89). It may be added that of the pair, which are invariably played in duet, one is called the male (*sianja*) and the other the female (*buega*). In Divina Kovari the former was called *sepiri* and the latter *inagu*; in Wasida, where *inagu* was a general term for 'flute', the male was called *otobu*, and the female *eb*. There seems to be no essential difference between the two save one of pitch.

While engaged in these very easy occupations the initiates are eating heartily, one might almost say deliberately battening. There is no restriction in the variety of their food, though it is served to them, not by their womenfolk who cook it, but by some old men who frequent the *sama* enclosure. It is the duty especially of the candidate's *nobo* and his wife (the candidate's *tata*) to ration him during seclusion.

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 76.

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881 784 The internees must avoid being seen by people of the village—in particular, it would seem, by their own fathers and mothers. Sexual intercourse is prohibited. Chinnery and Beaver speak of other tabus: 'Should a boy happen to talk over loudly, one of the guardians would say, "Be silent, I will thrust a spear through the floor". Should a boy happen to drop taro through the floor, he would be killed.' This latter penalty is, of course, no longer inflicted in these slip-shod days, and personally I am very doubtful whether such severity could ever have amounted to a rule.

Début and Decoration

881 The initiate is not called an *ebamei* (or *meiba*), i.e. a 'new child', until he or she has terminated the seclusion and made a formal début. This is a spectacular occasion, the main purpose of which is perhaps to do honour to the initiate. It is signalized by the youth's first appearance in the feather head-dress, which thenceforward he is entitled to wear. Hitherto it has been strictly forbidden him, so much so that I have known a serious quarrel between two men resulting from the fact that one of them had given feathers to the other's younger brother before the right to wear them had been formally granted. The following description is drawn mainly from a ceremony which I witnessed near Divina Kovari in the Hunjovarehu country.

On the day of their formal reappearance the initiates, who have remained unwashed during their long internment, are taken down to bathe at early morning. They then gather 881 in the bush beyond sight and earshot of the village, and in 302 this sylvan tiring-room undergo the lengthy and laborious 301 process of being decorated. Each sits on a mat and places himself entirely in the hands of the man who is dressing him. There are many others watching or helping: with a party of twelve youths and four girls at Divina Kovari, there must have been seventy or eighty onlookers. The tails of hair which have grown long during seclusion have red streamers tied to their extremities. In the middle they are gathered tightly together and bound with bark-cloth, so as to form a base for the mass of feathers which is to be tied on to the

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initiate's head. This decoration consists not only of feather-sets but of shell and ivory ornaments, particularly strings of dogs' teeth wound round and round the bunch of hair. One boy, when I saw him submitting patiently to the ministrations of his attendant, already had nine strings of dogs' teeth round his hair at the back, each consisting of perhaps 150 teeth, and he was then waiting for more. It will be easily imagined that the weight of this portentous mass of feathers and ornaments is very considerable, and as the process of decorating lasted some hours the eyes of their wearers were already blinking with fatigue at this early stage of the day. Oppressed either with the weight or the magnificence of their headdresses, they held their heads as still as possible or moved them stiffly, like a man unaccustomed to an evening shirt.

I have been assured that it is the function of the *nobo*, or maternal uncle, to present the *kokumbari*, for which he receives payment from the initiate's father in the form of a pig, and from his mother in the form of a pot (*obu*), a wooden bowl (*teva*), a water calabash, a *bo*, a netted bag (*eti*), a fish-net (*eutu*), and a spear. But, as so often in the case of such rules, we find on looking into the matter that other relatives may equally well perform the function. Thus in the present instance I recorded more cases where the *kokumbari* was given by the paternal uncle than where it was given by the maternal uncle. In other cases, again, it was given by the elder brother. On the whole, however, it may be regarded as proper for the *nobo* to give the *kokumbari*, as I have also heard that it is proper for him to attend to the initiate during his seclusion. But neither of these rules is observed with strictness.

While the decoration of the initiates is going forward, guests are arriving in the village. On such occasions it is the custom, not for the hosts, but for the guests, to perform a dance. (On a future occasion the invitation will be returned, and the hosts in the present instance will then be the performers.) In the ceremony at Divina Kovari two such parties of dancers arrived, one before and one after the formal entry of the decorated initiates. It is not necessary

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881 574 535 to describe their dances, which are entirely conventional and have no bearing on the ceremony in hand. They are, as far as I know, merely a form of entertainment.

881 535 The initiates make an ostentatious entry. The dancing is in full swing when a loud roar of voices is heard, and the *ebamei* appear assembled at the entrance to the village. They advance swiftly, flanked and covered in the rear by a mass of supporters so that the whole body forms a dense phalanx. Met with various gestures of resistance from the people in the village they come to a sudden halt in the centre, bracing themselves for a moment, and then advance again in the same irresistible manner. At the end of the village they turn about and charge down its length once more, and having done so, the compact body breaks up and resolves itself into the old-fashioned dance called *Kuru*. The boy initiates join in this, while the girls in the usual way dance apart, either in front or rear.

All the *ebamei*, both male and female, carry mock spears of light white wood, each with a piece of red-dyed bark-cloth tied near the point. Many of them also carry stone clubs. Both boys and girls wear their *bo* which have been newly put on for the ceremony (though they have probably been in the habit of wearing garments of this kind long before). They almost stagger under their gigantic head-dresses, and their persons are festooned with frilled yellow grass, tassels of which hang over the face so as to form a partial disguise.

The *ebamei* soon withdraw from the *kuru* dance, and while this and the other dances proceed with undiminished vigour, stand in line watching them, evidently uncomfortable and apparently almost stupefied.

Presentation of 'Otobu'

881 Late in the afternoon a number of the *ebamei* were presented with their *otobu*. Whereas every initiate receives his *kokumbari* feathers, not every one of them receives an *otobu*. However, as it is very usual to make this an occasion for presenting an *otobu*, I may pass on to describe the method of presentation as if it formed the next step in the series of

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(*a*) Formal appearance of the Initiates

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(*b*) Initiates wearing *Kekumbari* feathers

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ceremonies. 'I shall return to the difficult question of the significance of *otohu* at the end of the chapter. For the present it may be said that it is a ceremonial ornament of great value and often of great beauty which is commonly bestowed on the occasion of the début and *kokumbari*.

[554] It is the invariable custom to call upon some old warrior of distinction to bestow these ornaments: such a man is called *aguma* or *atemba*. On this occasion at Divina Kovari there were three of them, and I shall describe their part in the ceremony at some length.

The first was an old man of Togahu. Firm and self-possessed, he advanced to where the *otohu* had been laid on a mat, grasped them in two handfuls, and marched back and forth along a path which the spectators had formed between them, nearly a chain long and two or three yards broad. His business was to cry out the names of his own early victims, and having done this, he turned aside and handed over the *otohu* to the second *aguma*.

This was an old man named Handaupa of Hamara. Sitting somewhat apart he seemed loth to perform the office, and something like a murmur of applause was heard when he finally accepted the two bunches of ornaments and began. He was doddering with age and showed a tendency to corpulence or pursiness which is unusual in an Orokaiva. He commenced by shouting that as he was now a very old man he might not be able to summon all his conquests back to memory. Accordingly two younger men who remembered his exploits better than he did himself took their places one at either end of the path between the spectators. Handaupa now began to cry out the names of his victims, the tribes to which they belonged, and the circumstances in which they had been killed. He would run the length of the path while he dealt with each victim, and as the list continued the old man grew more and more energetic. He would bend his ear to the prompter at either end. Then, when a few words had roused his recollections, he would turn, hardly waiting for the prompter to finish, and career down the path again, shouting at the top of his voice. He gradually showed signs of fatigue, discarded first one bundle of *otohu*,

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then the other, and finally retained only two light switches of cassowary feathers. The catalogue of victims seemed inexhaustible. The sweat was pouring down Handaupa's lined old face, his voice was hoarse, and he was shaking with exhaustion and excitement. He paused to drink from a coco-nut and went on again, but just as his emotions seemed to be getting the better of him entirely, he suddenly said he must stop as he was tired, and with that he sank abruptly into a sitting position, and drained another coco-nut which one of the spectators held ready for him.

The third *aguma* was a very aged man from the neighbourhood of Divina Kovari. Feebler than Handaupa, he had a better memory, and was not so ambitious as to begin with the two weighty bundles of *otobu*. He was supported on either side by a younger man, and further assisted himself with a stick, but even his footsteps quickened as he warmed to his work and recounted the exploits of his youth and named his five victims.

The *aguma* exhorts the *ehamei* to bravery, and the reason for telling of his own prowess is to give them something to emulate. Such a demonstration, I understand, always marks the ceremony of investiture with the *otobu*. It is typical of a savage people to whom valour or mere bloodthirstiness is one of the first virtues. The Orokaiva is not only brave enough but exceedingly vainglorious: he loves to make a great show of martial prowess. It is interesting to note that this, like other ceremonies, has a sort of ambivalence, wavering between belief and make-believe, or between seriousness and banter. While the distinguished warrior is shouting his exploits, a chorus of young men stand by beating their drums and making fun of the old man in their songs. I have recorded one of the songs appropriate to the occasion:

Poponi opi be kajari ksko

which means that the old *aguma* is a boaster and a liar, that he never thrust his spear through the body of a man, but merely poked him with a shoot (*opi*) of the *Poponi* tree.

When these lengthy declamations are over, several logs

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are laid end to end and the *ebamei* sit down on them in a row, all facing in the same direction. They must not sit on the ground lest through contact with it they run the risk of some physical deformity. A man stands behind each boy (or girl), and the man who is to invest him with the *otobu* stands in front. (In the normal instance this would be the old warrior or *aguma*, but in the present case other men officiated as well. The *otobu* is thrown above the boy's head and caught and returned by the man behind him. This happens again and again until the man in front leans forward and binds the ornament in its place on the boy's forehead. This throwing back and forth, called *ketumbari*, or *iketumbo* ('giving and taking'), is said to be a precaution against subsequent baldness in the initiate.

In other tribes the *aguma* will offer the *otobu* to the initiate and, as the latter stretches out his hand to receive it, will snatch it away again. This (called *itarabo*?) is likewise done again and again till the *aguma* fixes it on the initiate as a general might pin a medal on the breast of a private. Another method of tantalizing the recipient is to throw the *otobu* from one to another of the spectators before finally giving it to him.

It is properly at this stage, while the initiate is waiting to receive his ornament, that the *aguma* lays upon him certain injunctions of an ethical character. These are always associated with the *otobu* and, as we shall see, they throw some light on the obscure meaning of the word. As he proffers and withdraws the ornament, the officiating *aguma* exhorts the candidate to refrain from thieving, from adultery, from quarrelling, and from such lawless acts as killing a neighbour's dog. It seems likely that the tantalizing delay in bestowing the ornament is itself a means of showing the youth that he must practice restraint, that he must wait his turn, in fact that he must not snatch.

Subsequent Rites: Prophylaxis and Purification

The greater number of the initiates at Divina Kovari received these *otobu* as well as the *kokumbari*, which is an inseparable feature of the ceremony of début. When the in-

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vestiture was over, the *ebamei* crowded on to the *obu* platform at the end of the village on which were already strewn heaps of high-smelling pig flesh. It was by now growing dusk, but there was still enough daylight for them to make a brilliant patch of colour against the dark background of forest trees. The reason for this move on the part of the *ebamei* was said variously to be (1) that all the people should see them, (2) that they should see all the people, and (3) that they should see all the pig meat.

During the whole of this time the *ebamei* have had to support the weight of their *kokumbari* feathers and ornaments, to which has now in most cases been added that of their *otobu*; and they have neither drunk water, nor, except for banana and sugar-cane, broken their fast since morning. These ordeals, however, must continue throughout the night, which is occupied with singing and dancing and with the *ai sumbasiona*, or abusing of the women. This latter consists of highly obscene choruses and action songs, to which the women respond in kind and with no lack of spirit. It may be that under the circumstances morality is loosened. I quote a sentence of Chinnery and Beaver's: 'In ordinary circumstances an initiation is a time of somewhat general licence, promiscuous intercourse being permitted between any initiated man and woman.'[1] Witnesses have assured me that such promiscuity is confined to the initiation ceremonies. The initiates bear no part in it, but between their elders it is unrestricted. No husband might object if another man made free with his wife, for, it was said, he would fear retaliation by sorcery if he interfered. Needless to say I have no more than verbal evidence for this licence, but there is little doubt that at these times it does occur.

Next morning the *ebamei* are subjected to a rite called *ate-ate*, which appears to mean literally 'demonstration'. Once more they sit in a row on the logs, each with a man behind him armed with a stout stick. In front of the initiates stand their respective mothers holding a taro in the left hand, and the sharp peeler of oyster or coco-nut shell

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 77.

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called *kari* in the right. When all is in readiness the women deftly slice off a piece of the taro, and with one motion send the fragment and the peeler across the head of the initiate to fall at the feet of the man waiting behind. The latter immediately smashes the peeler with his stick. This, I am informed, is a formal way of ending the tabu on the mother's cooking. Formerly, it appears, the cooking for the *ebamei* has not been done by his mother but by his *tata*; [1] henceforward after this rite his mother may cook for him without risk of any kind. It is said that this rite is once more a safeguard against baldness, the idea of which an Orokaiva so heartily hates. In other parts there is the custom of breaking a coco-nut above the initiate's head and allowing the fluid to fall over him; and for this the same reason (somewhat often called into service) is given, viz. that of preventing baldness.

But the partial fast of the initiates does not come to an end with the performance of this *ate-ate* ceremony. They are merely allowed to remove the heavier of their ornaments, a relief for which they must be heartily grateful. They continue to eat nothing more than banana and sugar-cane, and are still denied water until on the following day they eat the *suna*.

By this time all the guests have dispersed, carrying with them their presents of food, and the village is left very untidy indeed after the feasting, but in comparative quiet. The eating of the *suna* is a rite which pertains only to the initiates and their fellow villagers. The *suna* itself is a stew, a highly composite dish of which the ingredients seem to vary in different tribes. At Divina Kovari they were taro, pig flesh, *Tauga* nuts (*Terminalia Okari*), the fruit of the tree *Puga*, *Ina* (a kind of *andropogon*), and the leaves of the trees *Ega*, *Houra*, and *Sigoga*, and of the croton *simbiri*. The whole is stewed with the addition of coco-nut oil and pig's blood. I have been unable to discover any magical significance in any of these ingredients: except for the leaves, they are all

[1] Though other informants have said that the mother does cook for her own son while secluded. The matter is evidently of no great consequence, and the prohibition of the mother's cooking is not universal.

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881 common articles of diet. Comparing five lists made in different parts of the Division, I find that they all contain 262 taro, pig, and coco-nut in common; three contain *Puga* and *Tauga*; two bread-fruit and a kind of banana; while the other ingredients are various, with the exception of *simbiri*, or croton, which occurs in four of the five lists.

881 The initiates gather round the dish of *suna* and bend over it so as to be fumigated by the rising steam. They hold their 264 hands in the steam, and then withdrawing them massage their joints. They take handfuls of the hot leaves and apply 783 them to their private parts, their hip-joints, their elbows, their arm-pits, &c. They end by eating the stew. The other villagers stand by, themselves partaking and sponging their bodies with the leaves. The *suna* is sometimes set out in a wooden dish (*teva*) and a hot stone placed in it to increase the volume of steam, while the initiates stooping over the dish may be covered with pandanus mats to give them something like a Turkish bath.

After partaking of the *suna* the initiate is at liberty to resume his full diet. (During the last two or three days he has eaten nothing but banana and sugar-cane.) But even so he must be cautious. Before passing him a piece of taro one of the elders will pass it under his legs—a queer precaution which appears again and again in Orokaiva ceremonies, either as a purification or as a prophylaxis. Having thus received the taro, the hungry initiate must nibble it only and put it aside for a while. Furthermore, he must not handle it, but convey it to his mouth on a piece of stick as a fork. If [826] he should handle it and afterwards scratch his head the penalty would be the severe one of baldness.

Meaning and Purpose of the Ceremonies

881 *Initiation.* The actual occurrences of the initiation cycle having been described we are now in a position to discuss their meaning and purpose. We may begin by considering the initiation ceremony described on pp. 180–3. Laying special stress upon the fact that the terrifying threats of the spirits against the candidates are apparently averted by the

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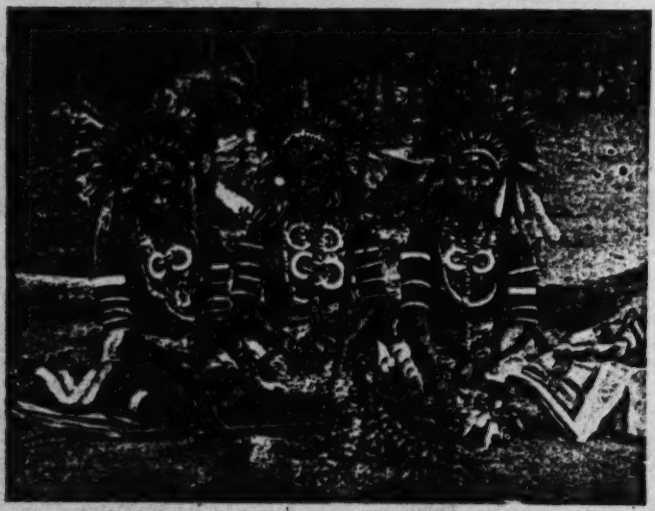
(*a*) Eating the *Sana*



(*b*) Girls newly emerged from Puberty Seclusion

PLATE XXVI [facing p. 194]

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881 prayers or efforts of the latters' elders, Chinnery and Beaver interpret the ceremonies as follows:

'As far as can be ascertained at present, the underlying idea of the ceremony seems to be to instil absolute and lasting terror into the candidates, and to make them think that their elders have beaten off the spirits; while in this receptive and chastened frame of mind, the lads, imbued with the idea of the power of the men, will pay attention to the instruction given. There appears to be an idea that the spirits of the dead are present, and that the initiated, i. e. the living, are keeping them away from the candidates.'

There is no doubt that the Orokaiva, whatever his age, has a very real dread of the real *embahi*. According to the above interpretation the initiated elders play upon this dread in the uninitiated juniors, and pose as the latters' saviours in order to reduce them to a receptive and obedient mood.

It seems to me that this interpretation may emphasize too strongly the pedagogical aspect of the initiation. We may reasonably doubt, I believe, whether the elders have any serious intention of reducing the initiates to a fit state of mind for subsequent instruction (though one does not deny that the painful experience of the youth may have considerable educative value in itself).

881 534 Furthermore, the interpretation does not, in my opinion, lay sufficient stress on the actual paraphernalia, viz. the bull-roarers and flutes, which play a more important part in the ceremony than would appear. The bull-roarer and the flute are esoteric objects in that they are never seen but only heard by the uninitiated, and it is always pretended that the notes and noises of these instruments, together with that of the hollow shell whistle called *koni pamoni*, are the voices of the *embahi*. Indeed, it might be said that the bull-roarer, the sacred flute, and the *koni pamoni*, together with the pretence that their notes represented the voices of the spirits, constituted the secrets of a secret society. The society is so comprehensive as to include the whole of the adult-tribe, i. e. all those who have duly passed through the initiation cycle, and, like some generous societies who bestow a fellowship on receipt of a subscription, it is always ready to take any one into membership who can provide a pig.

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To the uninitiated juniors who, at a discreet distance, have heard the mysterious sounds of flute and bull-roarer coming from the quarters where their elders are known to be, it has always appeared as if the latter are hobnobbing with the *embabi*; and this pretence, viz. that the initiated are in league with or familiar with the spirits, is the essence of the adult secret society. Chinnery and Beaver have written: 'The underlying idea about the bull-roarer is that it is a spirit that makes the noise, and this belief is strongly impressed by every device upon uninitiated women, children, and those who have not passed through the ceremony. This belief will usually be found wherever the bull-roarer is used in Papua.'[1] But it seems to me that in their interpretation of the ceremony they have not allowed as much importance to the bull-roarer (and the flute and whistle) as these paraphernalia deserve.

At an initiation ceremony, of which I saw some of the stages at Doboduru, the supposititious *embabi* were stamping, crouching, and leaping in the conventional manner as well as uttering their alarming cries, but they were also continually blowing the flutes, and one of their number was from time to time sounding the bull-roarer. Indeed, the flute and the bull-roarer formed very essential features of their demonstration; and it would, I think, be a mistake not to allow these instruments some importance in an interpretation of the ceremony.

The initiation ceremony, therefore, as practised by the southern Orokaiva would seem to be the acceptance of the junior into the adult society, and the process of acquainting him with the secrets of that society.

But why should the initiation involve such painful experiences for the initiate? One may hesitate to credit the elders with any serious motive. If they behave so as to reduce the initiates to a condition of fear and obedience it is not expressly in order to make them apt pupils for subsequent instruction. Rather would I compare the initiated to the members of a secret society who, on admitting new candidates, take the opportunity of enacting their pretence to

[1] Chinnery and Beaver, *loc. cit.*, p. 71.

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the full, and incidentally of giving the candidates a thorough ragging. This is always the privilege of those who are already 'in the know'. In this case their pretence is that they are on terms of familiarity with certain dangerous and terrifying creatures—the *embabi*—who utter weird cries. They accordingly imitate the *embabi* in their gestures and conduct, and their cries on the bull-roarer, flute, and *koni pamoni*. Before giving away their secret, therefore, the elders make the most of it, and rejoice to see the learners thoroughly frightened.

At the same time—whether this be the deliberate intention or no—it cannot be doubted that this ragging must have the indirect effect of enhancing the power of the raggers. It, so to speak, knocks the stuffing out of a possibly uppish youth, and makes him an amenable member of the adult society to which he is now introduced. By feeling to his sorrow the full affect of this adult society's power he will enter it in a humbler and more appreciative spirit; and we may be sure that when his turn comes to act the ragger he will bear his part with all the greater vim for having been roughly handled himself.

I have previously spoken of the curious intensity of native make-believe, and it is quite possible that not only the candidates but also the adult impersonators may give themselves up to the belief that *embabi* are actually present. But I cannot imagine that such serious belief long retains the upper hand, and I feel that the ceremony admits of two constructions, that it may be viewed (not only by ourselves, but by those who actually practise it) as alternatively solemn and frivolous, at one moment as if the initiates were being brought into the sacred danger of contact with the *embabi*, the next as if the initiated were having a great deal of fun at the expense of the frightened and bewildered candidates. It may be remembered that, although I have from time to time used the expression 'sacred flute' (a New Guinea term perpetuated by Haddon), yet as far as the Orokaiva are concerned no sacred character appears to belong intrinsically to the flute or the bull-roarer.

Seclusion and the Purificatory Rites. We may next consider

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881 the purpose of seclusion and of the purificatory rites which follow it. It is often supposed that the seclusion through which natives commonly pass about the age of puberty is a period of intensive education in tribal lore and manners. I cannot find that this is so among the Orokaiva. It is true, I was told, that the youths and girls are instructed to observe certain laws, as e.g. against theft and adultery; but there is no evidence that they are consistently schooled, and indeed the suggestion that the house of seclusion was like a 'school' caused a great deal of laughter. As we have found, the internees spend a very idle time, and except for mastering the long flutes among the southern tribes, they have no set tasks to perform. I cannot think, therefore, that the purpose of seclusion is mainly educative.

If one asks either the elders or the initiates themselves for the reasons of seclusion, one will almost invariably receive the same answer: boys and girls are secluded to make them grow big. They do no hard work; they are advised to keep warm, still, and silent; they are forbidden sexual intercourse; they are overfed. It is said that to walk abroad and be seen by those who should not see them would impede their growth. The initiate's father and mother will not see him during his seclusion, but from time to time, I am informed, his *tata* will take the circumference of his arm or leg with a piece of string and show it as a register of progress to his parents. When they first set eyes on him on his emergence from seclusion it is appropriate that they should *titimirari*—'be astonished', or 'hardly believe their eyes' at the progress he has made. If they were to see him during his seclusion it would, for some reason never made plain, check his growth. The real explanation for this queer prohibition is perhaps simply this, that for the boy's near relatives to see his progress at an intermediate stage would spoil the effect at his début, when, to their surprise and delight, they behold a son who has developed almost beyond recognition. He does not grow imperceptibly under his mother's eyes, but rather like the lad who, returning from a boarding school, seems to have leapt into long trousers.

The ideal Orokaiva is not a fat man, but well-conditioned.

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The ideal Orokaiva is not a fat man, but well-conditioned.

Either by nature or by manner of life he is prevented from 'running to fat', so that the ideal never borders on adiposity. But he admires plumpness as he abhors skinniness. I was never able to discover a word in his language for fat, stout, or obese (indeed, there are, generally speaking, no such figures to be seen); but for a comparatively well-fleshed body he simply uses the word 'good'. Altogether I think we may attach a good deal of value to the native's own explanation of seclusion, and may conclude that the principal purpose of that seclusion is to make the initiate put on flesh, to bring him as near to an admired condition of plumpness as the physical make-up and the *milieu* of an Orokaiva will permit.

Just as the native admires a well-conditioned body, so he has a peculiar sensitiveness regarding physical deformity, and a horror of projecting bones and skinniness. An interesting evidence of this is found in the swear-words or terms of abuse which he uses. Besides such expressions as *Sovai-ta-mei* (son of a *sovai*) and *Pureambo* (waster or lazy-bones), there are *Temburite* (skinny-ribs), *Teperete* (spindle-shanks), *Kumuperete* (which means that the backbone is visible), *Abo-pokumo* (too much of the sacral vertebrae), *Utu-jabuti* (elephantiasis legs), *Tunga-dipori* (long neck), *Tengeu-pepeki* (big ears). Not a few of his ritual precautions are aimed at preventing these deformities, and it appears that he is specially liable to contract them at the end of his seclusion. Hence the precautionary and purificatory observances which we see at the end of the cycle. For instance, the initiate is not allowed to sit on the ground for fear of *baupeni* (elephantiasis of the scrotum). It is necessary to provide a mat for him to sit on while he is being decorated, and a log while he is going through the *ate-ate* ceremony. Similarly there are various precautions against baldness, which I have mentioned; and before he is quite free to come and go as he pleases he must pass through a general purificatory rite, viz. that of the *suna*. The object of the *suna* is expressly to prevent bodily deformities or afflictions such as the prevalent glandular swelling in the groin or the swelling or distortion of joints.

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In fine it may be argued that the seclusion, together with the purificatory rites at the end of it, aim (the one in a positive manner, the other in a negative or precautionary manner) at the physical perfection of the initiate.

I have never met with any native rationale for the *suna qua* ceremonial observance; but a very similar process is sometimes used in the treatment of sickness; and as the argument is in this case fairly clear it may throw some light upon the rite in general. A man who has for some time been suffering from headache and general pains submits himself to treatment called *jura*.[1] Various leaves (*Tebo*, *Hamanya*, *Bakimo*, *Haiva*, *Hamburi*, *Kore*, *Urga*, are the names of some of them—but there are many recipes for *jura*) are scraped and pounded in a wooden dish with coco-nut oil. The patient squats over it covering himself with a pandanus mat, a hot stone is slipped into the dish, and he sits in a cloud of steam. The only remarkable feature about the leaves used is that they all possess a more or less strong smell (*mune*), that of the *tebo* being in European nostrils nothing short of abominable.

Now it is a very common Orokaiva theory that sickness may be due to the immanence of the spirits of the dead in the patient, and I have been assured on more than one occasion that they may be driven out by noisome medicines, simply, it is said, because they cannot endure the smell. The object of the *jura* fumigation, therefore, seems to be to drive out the malignant spirits; and (although I have not noted whether it possessed any strong smell) the ceremonial *suna* may possibly be used with the same idea. The novices during their true initiation in the *embahi* ceremony, and during their subsequent seclusion and association with the flutes and bull-roarer, have been in intimate association with the spirits of the dead—*sovai*, *embahi*, or *siango*. The fact that there is a vast deal of sham in the whole cycle of ceremonies does not altogether preclude a belief that the *embahi* are really present. As we have observed, make-believe and true

[1] See p. 297. The word is sometimes given to the ceremonial rite which I have called *suna* throughout, but I have not heard the word *suna* given to the 'medical' process.

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belief seem with the native to merge into one another: they are too near extremes between which he may be said to shilly-shally. Therefore, when the time comes to be done with the ceremony for good and all, he takes the precaution of removing by a final purificatory rite all possible influences for evil which the *embabi* may have left in the initiates. The same explanation, it may be noted, is offered for the various rites, including the *suna*, observed by the man-slayer, who must rid himself of the peculiarly malignant spirit of the man he has slain.

The Otobu. It remains now to say something further of the *otobu*. I have already referred to the homicidal *otobu*, or *esa*, in Chapter XI, and described the rites observed in the bestowal of the ordinary *otobu* in the present chapter. It is now our task to consider the meaning—or the various meanings—of the word. The *otobu* may for the present be defined as one of a number of distinctive ornaments or objects which, at a price, are ceremonially bestowed, and which the recipient is thenceforward entitled to wear or use. It will be understood that any one who was, so to speak, masquerading with an *otobu* would be exposed to obloquy or ridicule. In earlier days it is doubtful whether any man would have had the hardihood or folly to attempt it. Where, therefore, one sees a man holding a highly ornamented lime gourd with a shell mouth-piece, or a string bag decorated with dogs' teeth, or wearing cuscus streamers tied at intervals with bunches of feathers, it may be concluded that he has paid the price for them (or probably that the price has been paid in his behalf) and that he is fully entitled to their use.

There is a considerable variety of these ceremonial objects, e.g. a specially ornamented *bo* or string bag (*eti* or *betava*), decorated spears or stone clubs, bone forks for eating, lime-pots, belts embroidered with *saima* shells or made of black creeper cord, cuscus streamers, &c. More commonly they take the form of ornaments (*bambo*) for the breast or forehead—hornbill beaks set in a half-circle, *gana*, *bnave*, *bono*, and the like (*vide* p. 39). They are always fine examples of their kind, and in some cases are extremely

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was he who went about his work quietly, who returned from his garden with wood on his shoulder and set it down, and then chewed his betel without 'rowing'. Diligence bears some part in this rather complex ideal, and so certainly does generosity: an *otohu-embo*, I was assured, would never refuse a request for tobacco. But it is on the negative virtues of respectability that the greater stress is laid.

Now I am bound to think that this concept of *otohu* as a good character bears directly on the instructions which the *aguwa* gives the initiate at the bestowal of the *otohu* ornament. I have heard a number of versions of these instructions: the youth is adjured not to quarrel or brawl, not to steal, not to commit adultery. He is told to be diligent in the garden, in hunting, and in fishing; and to be generous and helpful, never refusing to fetch wood and water, or to give betel-nut to his friend. So a woman is told to lend an ear to what her husband says, and never give him 'strong talk' in return; to accompany him wherever he goes; to be faithful to him; and to keep her hands off other women's property.

It is at the actual presentation of the *otohu* ornament that these injunctions are laid upon the youth or the girl, and thenceforward, it appears, the initiate must live up to the *otohu* character. I have been told that a man might refuse to enter into a quarrel, saying, No, I am an *otohu-embo*; whereas one who had never received the *otohu* would grow up bad-tempered and a ne'er-do-well.

We may conclude, therefore, that the possession of an *otohu* does involve a social obligation. It is an honour and a privilege bestowed by society, but it means that the recipient should settle down as a thoroughly amenable member of that society.

I would not claim that this meaning, viz. decent or amenable to society, was necessarily the basic meaning of *otohu*. I should think rather that the name belonged in the first place to the concrete object or ornament, and that it came to be used for the negative virtues of respectability because those virtues were impressed upon the youth when the ornament was given him.

I am quite unable to offer any useful conjecture as to the

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301 554 196 derivation of the word. It was observed that *otohu* was the name given to the 'male' flute at Wasida, though this seems to throws no light on its meaning. More interesting perhaps is the fact that among the Baruga, southern neighbours to the Orokaiva, *kotopo* means a clan badge; and that this badge commonly takes the form of some arrangement of white ovulum shells which are presented to the initiates (fixed to their arms or legs) when they emerge from seclusion. It is not impossible that the Orokaiva *otohu* (or *kotopo*) —although it has no clan significance—should have been originally identical with the clan badge of the Baruga.

Girls' Puberty Seclusion

• 881 The puberty seclusion of girlhood together with the formal ceremony of emergence may be treated separately, although they are in principle similar to the initiatory seclusion and the début which have been described in the foregoing pages. This last section should be regarded as an appendix to the present chapter.

[841] As explained on p. 184, the girl enters seclusion directly her first menses appear. After a term of varying length she makes a début similar to that of the initiates and receives her *kokumbari* or feather decorations. She may be content with this, marry, and never pass through her initiation. But very commonly she will qualify for initiation and an *otohu*, and this will necessitate a second seclusion among the initiates. It is the first, or puberty initiation, which I shall now briefly describe.

The girl is confined in a specially constructed compartment of the house. I have cases in which this was variously the house of her father, her maternal uncle, and her husband's father (for a girl may go to the house of her husband's father before she has reached the age of puberty). She is commonly confined alone, though, if by a happy coincidence several girls in the neighbourhood reach this point of development at about the same time, it will be arranged that they come down out of their seclusion on one and the same occasion. It thus happens that the duration of their confinement varies considerably, one girl having to wait for another.

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The seclusion will probably last several months; but in this, as in most other cases of seclusion, the time is not fixed, but depends upon the pig[1] and the garden produce. When these are ready the seclusion may be brought to an end.

The girl's confinement is not always of the strictest. She may retire to the bush either by means of a passage between palm-leaf walls at the rear of the house, or else she may walk out wrapped in an *obi* mat. These precautions are meant, of course, to screen her from the view of the village. The compartment in which she lives is small and dark, perhaps a walled-off corner, though she is not confined there perpetually. In some cases I noted that she was allowed the freedom of the whole house. She is well fed, and lives in complete and probably contented idleness; nor can I hear of any special instructions which her elders may impart to her during this period. Her body is covered with a mess of coco-nut oil and charcoal, the effect of which is supposedly to make her complexion fairer (*panjari* or *boboma*). In the broad daylight the skin of a secluded girl wears a somewhat yellow or sallow tint which is deemed attractive. She must avoid being seen by men, though this rule evidently does not apply to her father and immediate male relatives.

When preparations for the girl's début are complete she is carried down to the river at earliest dawn on the shoulders of a woman, and there the oil and charcoal are washed off. This operation should be over in time for the girl to be back in her house before full daylight, but one may be up in time to witness the curious spectacle of a woman staggering through the village with a full-grown girl, completely naked, sitting astride her shoulders. In the very touchy or susceptible condition in which a girl finds herself at the end of seclusion, it appears that there is a source of danger in contact with the ground. But this risk, if it is always felt, is sometimes ignored, for on one occasion I saw several

[1] One pig, indeed, may serve for several quite independent ceremonies. A man Tembari, for example, has his pubescent daughter and his widowed sister both interned in his house. He has a pig fattening, and when it has reached a satisfactory size it will serve for a feast at which his daughter and sister will terminate their seclusion and his son receive a perineal band.

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881 girls who ended their seclusion together go down on foot to the river. Here they were washed by a number of older women, who engaged in a boisterous water-fight, and then all returned in a body dancing and singing extremely indecent songs.

After this bath at day-break the remainder of the morning is given to decorating the girl. Her skin is oiled again, the hair is shaved back a little from her forehead (merely for effect, I believe), and she is bedecked with feathers and ornaments.

The actual début of the girl, or in many cases of the girls, is made with some little dramatic effect. They have been brought together in one house, before which is set up a screen of palm-leaves with an opening or gateway concealed behind curtains of bark-cloth. When all is in readiness, the curtains are drawn apart and reveal the girls standing abreast, with a young man on either flank, apparently as escort. The girls are armed with spears or pineapple clubs; and in one hand they may carry a bunch of ripe betel-nuts, or a new-painted *bo*, rolled up, which will presently serve as a dancer's shawl. The striking feature of their make-up is the [292] *bo* or bark-cloth skirt which they are actually wearing. This is of plain bark-cloth, unornamented save for splashes or smears of red; and in front and rear it has a hole which purports to expose their genitalia to the view of the onlookers. Thus attired the young women move slowly and in silence across the village and sit in a row on a log which their escorts have procured for them. After remaining some ten minutes on the log they rise and seat themselves on a coco-nut mat (*tere*) spread on the ground; and then after another ten minutes or so they rise once more and mingle with their friends. They will subsequently join in the dance which has been organized for the occasion, and they will not discard their [783] ornaments till sunset. The ceremony has not ended until they eat the purificatory stew called *suna*, and steam their bodies over it.

881 751 I have never succeeded in obtaining any satisfactory explanation for the details of this procedure, i.e. the weapons, the betel-nuts, &c. The perforation of the *bo* is to the native

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an old custom: in after-life a girl would be put to shame if she were reminded that she had made her début without observing that inexplicable but important detail. Some said that the holes in the *bo* were safeguards against the bodily deformities and swellings which the Orokaiva so much dreads; though why they should have this effect remained a problem. It may be that the red smears on the bark-cloth were symbolical of menstrual blood, though no native witness gave that interpretation or any other to them. The sitting first on a log and then on a *tere* mat are both precautions against physical deformity: they exemplify the same ceremonial avoidance of contact with the ground which we have seen with initiates in the *kokumbari* ceremony. Lastly, the fumigation or steaming over the pot of *suna*, and the application of it to parts of the body, are all directed against the same possibility, that of physical deformity.

Among the southern tribes the girl continues to wear an ordinary *bo* (i.e. without perforation) after the ceremony. Among the northern she goes naked until her marriage.

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535 536 765 in costume, have suggested a possible affinity with the masked dance of the Western and Gulf Papuans, and the suggestion here put forward—be it remembered, in an entirely tentative manner—is that the performers in the Orokaiva dance and drama originally impersonate the spirits of the dead, who foregather to partake of the mortuary feast.

The feast is the real act of placation. It is provided for the spirits, and in order to make the donors of the feast feel more satisfied that it is accepted by them, the spirits are brought on to the scene in the persons of the disguised dancers and actors. It may be repeated that no native ever placed this interpretation on the dance and drama, and that, in the absence of more telling evidence than I have been able to supply, it is intended for nothing more than a conjecture.

535 536 881 We have next to consider the dance and drama as constituting a rite of initiation. I regret that during the whole of my stay among the Aiga and Binandele there was no opportunity of witnessing an initiation, so I can bring forward only verbal evidence that the *ebamei*, or 'new children', i.e. the initiates, make their appearance together with the dancers, and witness the performance of a play. I have also been told that in some cases the initiate bears a minor part in the play, viz. that of a *buivi*. At any rate, however, it may be regarded as certain that the dance and drama form part of the cycle of puberty ceremonies among the Aiga and Binandele.

The question is whether they constitute the essence of the ceremony, i.e. whether they correspond to the meeting with the *embabi*, which is the essence of initiation among the southern Orokaiva. Here again it may be remembered that no native has ever spoken of the two rites as corresponding, and the suggestion that the dance and drama have some initiatory significance is my own. It is based upon the following facts: (1) The dance and drama always form part of the puberty cycle. (2) In the dance the performers are virtually disguised by their costumes, and their identity is meant to remain secret, just as it is with the *embabi*, who are supposedly irrecognizable to the initiates. (Further, as I have just indicated, one is tempted to conjecture that the

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disguised dancers among the Aiga and Binandele originally represented spirits of the dead.) (3) In the drama we find the same kind of secrecy. The identity of the actors is not revealed, and the plot of the play is not divulged before its performance, nor does any one care to pry into these matters. Furthermore, in the drama there always appears at least one *binei* or *sovai*, i.e. spirit of the dead.

The gist of initiation among the southern Orokaiva is to bring the candidate into contact with the supposed spirits of the dead, and make him acquainted with the bull-roarer and the flutes which are the voices of the spirits; whereas among the Aiga and Binandele, who know neither the bull-roarer nor the flute, the candidate is, nevertheless, brought into contact with the spirits of the dead in the drama and conceivably also in the dance which accompanies the drama.

This interpretation of the ceremony, viz. as a rite of initiation, may be thought unnecessary in view of the other, which gives it a mortuary significance. It will be noted, however, that the two are not incompatible if there be any truth in the theory that the dance and drama bring forth impersonators of the spirits. It may be noted that, since the confinement of a batch of youths and girls is a comparatively rare occurrence, the dance and drama appear usually in their mortuary guise alone.

In fine the combined dance and drama seem to me primarily of a mortuary nature, but this may make them all the more suitable for initiation, an essential idea of which is, apparently, to bring the initiate into contact with the supposed spirits of the dead. For the present, then, I shall set down only this much as a conclusion, viz. that the dance and drama (whatever their real significance) constitute a mortuary rite, and possibly also an initiatory one, and as for their significance it is suggested that the performers in the dance, and at least the main actors in the drama represent spirits of the dead.

Aesthetic and Recreative Value

So far I have spoken of the ceremonial functions of the dance and drama. I now wish to draw attention to their more real, 'live', functions, viz. the aesthetic and recreative.

3: Reay E-4, 5 (1951) 1953 OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

155 862 threatening that she would never again let him come to her breast. But as a rule the biting lesson seems to be learned easily, and mothers appear to have very little trouble with children biting them during the prolonged lactation.

155 866 The second conflict situation is the one induced by the adult men deliberately provoking fright in the small boy. The boy has to grow up to be fearless. Before the pacification of the Orokaiva and the surrounding tribes, this was part of the training of boys to be warriors. Ultimately, after being frightened by the men quite frequently over a couple of years or so, the boy is no longer afraid. But, in the meantime, his world is uncertain and conflicting. He learns to keep close to his father, so that he can rush to him if someone frightens him, and this association with his father continues long after he overcomes his fear of strange men making strange noises. It does not seem to occur to the child to run for comfort in these circumstances to his mother.

Initiation into Adulthood.

881 783 The initiatory rites are clearly divided into three major parts—the terror, the seclusion and the investiture. The initiation of a girl does not encompass all of these. At puberty she is secluded for a time, and then goes through a little purificatory ritual before ceremonially emerging from her seclusion. She does not have to endure the terror.

778 534 What I have termed "the terror" is what F. E. Williams refers to as the "initiation ceremony proper."[8] After being secluded for a short time, the candidates emerge and are shown the bullroarers and sacred flutes. Then the *embahi* (malevolent spirits) appear to them by moonlight and chase them around the village. The boys' parents cry out to the spirits to spare their children and not to devour them, but the *embahi* rush around crying out, "Kambo, kambo, kambo!" (Bite, bite, bite!). The boys are well aware that the *embahi* are a sham, and that they are really only fellow-villagers in disguise, but they are terrified none the less. Eventually, the *embahi* allow the boys' parents to overpower them and chase them from the village.

After they have undergone the "terror," the boys are secluded in the *oro* ("men's house"). ". . . During this period, they are instructed to be honest, obliging and diligent." They learn to play the flutes, and they plait armlets; otherwise they are inactive. Food is served to them by some old men. The boy's *nobo* (mother's brother), who has appeared as one of the *embahi* then returns to the village, divested of his frightening make-up, to lead the boy to the *oro* for his seclusion, and is responsible for feeding him during this period.

783 865 The final phase of the initiation is the boy's emergence from his seclusion. Like the girl on her emergence, he goes through a purificatory ritual. Then he is fitted with the *kokumbari* (feather headdresses), the wearing of which is a demonstration of his manhood. Again, it is the *nobo* (mother's brother) who presents him with the

[8] *Orokaiva Society*, p. 180, also pp. 181–192.

3: Reay E-4, 5 (1951) 1953 OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

headdresses. At the conclusion of the initiation, some of the initiates are presented with the *otohu* ornaments. (Formerly, it was always a distinguished warrior who presented these.) The initiates then fast for a day and a night. That night, there is sexual licence for the senior villagers, a temporary lifting of tabus on incest and adultery, but the initiates themselves are not permitted to participate.

In interpreting the initiation ceremonies of the Orokaiva, Chinnery and Beaver state that "the idea . . . seems to be to instil absolute and lasting terror into the candidates, and to make them think that their elders have beaten off the spirits; while in this receptive and chastened frame of mind, the lads, imbued with the idea of the power of the men, will pay attention to the instruction given. There appears to be an idea that the spirits of the dead are present, and that the initiated, *i.e.* the living, are keeping them away from the candidates."[6]

Amongst the living, the initiation ritual juxtaposes the two groups, initiated and uninitiated, the one group terrified and utterly helpless, and the other well able to deal with the *embahi* spirits and drive away danger. Thus the respect for seniority, which is informally learned during childhood, is finally established.

An Erikson-type psychoanalytic interpretation would doubtless find in the *embahi's* threat to devour the boys, with the menacing reiteration "Bite, bite, bite!" a dramatization of the *meni orosati's* guilt at biting the mother. I have not enough data to confirm or deny the admissibility of such an interpretation.

Above all, initiation involves the explicit instruction of the boys in the *otohu* virtues. This instruction takes place during their period of seclusion in the *oro*. Later, when *otohu* ornaments are given to some of them, they are again exhorted in detail to practise these virtues. The possession of an *otohu* imposes a social obligation on the wearer to "live up to it," and the prestige associated with this ornament indubitably ensures that a large number of people do in fact approximate to the ideal *otohu* patterns of behaviour.

(3) Sanctions

In Orokaiva society, sanctions operate diffusely and need no specific person's direction to put them into effect. The *embo kiti*, whom F. E. Williams called a "clan headman," but who is really more of a village headman whose position is hereditary within a certain lineage of the clan, has a limited authority which is backed by no sanctions. He has no power to reward or punish, except by making obvious his approval or disapproval of various lines of action. In fact, there is no rewarding and punishing authority at all.

Retaliation seems to have been the commonest sanction in former times, in the form of direct violence or the more subtle method of sorcery.[7] Retaliation by sorcery may still be practised; I have no information on this point. Certainly deaths are still attributed to sorcery. When (during 1950) several people from the same village

[6] R. W. P. Chinnery and W. N. Beaver, in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. XLV, 1915.

[7] F. E. Williams, *Orokaiva Society*, pp. 327–329.